

# Veterans, city leaders, remember our fallen heroes on Memorial Day

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BRISTOL – What began as a solemn procession downtown Monday morning culminated with a celebratory moment along Memorial Boulevard, in front of its newest addition.

Bristol Police Department's Color Guard, Bristol Fire Department, city officials and veterans assembled on Hope Street across from City Hall around 9 a.m., before marching down North Main Street, heading left on School Street and down to the gazebo on the Boulevard.



The procession continued with a Missing in Action/Prisoner of War (POW/MIA) Ceremony and the reading of Bristol natives who were killed in action during World War I, World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

“Bristol has a huge amount of people who served in the U.S. military,” Mayor Jeff Caggiano told the small crowd gathered around the gazebo. “Today is a day to honor those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.”

Members of the City's Veterans Council and American Legion Post 2 organized the procession and Council Vice Chairman Richard Carello spoke about the true meaning of Memorial Day.

“Decoration Day first started in May of 1865 in Charleston, South Carolina, after the Civil War ended,” Carello explained. “It later became Memorial Day.”

The Civil War was the deadliest military conflict in American history and therefore became the catalyst for memorializing those who fought and lost their lives for our country.

Memorial Day actually did not become a federal holiday until 1971.

“Looking over the crowd it looks like we have more and more attendees every year,” Carello pointed out.

His brother Dave Carello, Chairman of the Veterans Council, also addressed the crowd.

“Bristol is a big little city and we have a huge veteran community,” he said, echoing the Mayor's words.

“Taps” was played and a three-round volley performed by members of the Legion's Honor Guard, before people migrated up the Boulevard to where the City's brand new Blue Star Memorial Marker and Garden were unveiled.

Bristol's Youth Mayor of the Day Sydney Ray read a proclamation on behalf of the City, dedicating the marker and garden to all service men and women.

This project was led by the Bristol Garden Club, which has been working since 2019 to bring one of these markers to the Boulevard. The Main Street Community Foundation provide grant funding and club members worked with the City's Parks Department and Inland Wetlands Commission to secure the site.

Bristol Garden Club's Blue Star Committee Chairwoman Mary Dombrowski joined Conn. Garden Club Blue Star Chairwoman Krista Swanson Fiorini in unveiling the marker, to the sound of "oohs" and "ahhs" among witnesses.

"Getting it to completion is very exciting," Dombrowski said. "It is intended to be a living memorial to honor our veterans, past, present and future."

The marker stands between two dogwood trees, just like the original Blue Star Memorial in New Jersey.

"It's nice to end with this, whereas the other ceremony was somber, this is more joyous," Mayor Caggiano said.

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